



Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) conditions of grant 2020 to 2021.

To: England

For info: Contacts from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Key Issues

On 14 July 2020, the government announced the funding allocation for universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) grant 2020 to 2021 under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002.

The guidance provides details of the grant that will be payable for the financial year from the beginning 1 April 2020.

1. Introduction

On 14 July 2020, the government announced the funding allocation for universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) grant 2020 to 2021 under Section 14 of the Education Act 2002.

The guidance provides details of the grant that will be payable for the financial year beginning 1 April 2020.

Details of the full guidance can be access via the following link: -

[UIFSM conditions of grant 2020 to 2021](#)

2. Funding Rates and allocations

Each meal taken by an eligible pupil attracts £2.34 which is an increase of £0.04 from £2.30 allocated at the beginning of the financial year 2019. In making the allocation the government are making the assumption that pupils will take 90 school meals over an academic year, providing £444.60 per eligible pupil, as counted below.

3. Final allocation

The government advise that they will calculate the final allocation for the academic year 2020 to 2021 in June 2021 using the number of pupils recorded as taking a meal in year 1 and year 2 in October 2020, and January 2021, school censuses and the guidance sets out the methodology that will be used.

4. Allocations to schools

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) states that it pays the UIFSM grant directly to academies and free schools open on or before 1 June 2020. The guidance outlines a schedule of allocations that Local authorities must allocate to each maintained school and any that convert to academy status after 1 June 2020. It is also stated that local authorities cannot hold the grant centrally.

The guidance sets out further details regarding how the grant should allocate for newly federated schools and for the circumstances where a school has closed.

5. Terms on which UIFSM grant is allocated to schools

The guidance states that the grant is designed to support schools in delivering the legal requirement to offer free school meals, meeting the school food standards, to all their reception, year 1 and year 2 pupils. Subject to meeting this legal duty, schools may spend the grant for the purposes of the school; that is to say for the educational benefit of pupils registered at that school, or for the benefit of pupils registered at other schools.

However, the government also advise that a school may spend the grant on community facilities, for example, services whose provision furthers any charitable purpose for the benefit of pupils at the school or their families, or people who live or work in the school's locality. Schools do not have to spend the entire grant in the financial year beginning 1 April 2020; they may carry forward some or all the grant.

6. Alternative provision pupils

The Education and Skills Funding Agency will allocate UIFSM grant to local authorities for each pupil recorded as aged 4, 5, and 6, on the January 2020 census, who is not recorded as eligible for a free school meal, and where the local authority placed the pupil in an independent school. The local authority is advised that it should spend the amount allocated for such pupils by the end of the academic year 2020 to 2021. They can only spend it on providing a free school meal to pupils not recorded as eligible for a free school meal, and aged 4, 5, and 6.

7. Payment arrangements

The Secretary of State will pay the grant to local authorities as follows:

- ... June 2020 - Seven twelfths of each school's provisional main allocation. Schools that were academies on 1 June 2020 will receive their UIFSM grant direct from EFSA in July 2020
- ... June 2021 - The final main allocation for each maintained school as at 1 June 2021, minus the amount of the main allocation paid in July 2020. Any school that converts to academy status after 1 June 2020, and by 1 June 2021, will receive the rest of its main allocation direct from EFSA in July 2021

Non-converter academies and free schools, which open after 1 April 2020, and by 31 August 2021, will receive their grant direct from EFSA. Where a school's final main allocation is less than the provisional payment made in June 2020, we will deduct the difference from grant payment in June 2021.

8. Certification

Local authorities must certify that they have passed on the correct amount of funding to schools or, where they have spent funding centrally, that they have spent it in line with the conditions of grant. We will issue a certification form in April 2021.

APSE COMMENT

The increase in funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals is welcomed, however, the APSE Performance Networks data for the average direct costs per lunchtime meals for primary and special schools highlights that costs have increased from £2.20 in 2014/15 to £2.53 in 2018/19. Local authorities have introduced measures such as working with suppliers, revising menus, and introducing new technology to mitigate the increases in staffing and food cost. However, against a background of a fragmented sector, the impact on the service from COVID – 19 and the uncertainty brought about by Brexit, delivering a nutritious hot school meal is becoming increasingly challenging.

On a final point, APSE would like to see the government invest in the future generation by providing a free school meal to every primary school pupil because providing a healthy lunchtime meal not only helps families that are in poverty but will contribute to saving resources and expenditure on obesity related conditions in the future.

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